



REOPENING GUIDANCE CHILD CARE FACILITIES

Based on state law, federal guidance, and Governor Abbott's disaster declaration, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is updating requirements for early care & education operations to assist them in protecting children in their care from COVID-19. HHSC Child Care Licensing (CCL) urges all current providers to immediately implement the following guidance, which is consistent with the new requirements.

This information is for child care programs that remain open, for use in conjunction with CDC's guidance for administrators of [child care programs and K-12 schools](#). This guidance does not supersede applicable federal, state, and local laws and policies for child care programs.

Business Operations

- Prohibit any person except the following from accessing an operation: operation staff; persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, HHSC Child Care Licensing staff, and Department of Family and Protective Services staff; professionals providing services to children; children enrolled at the operation; and parents who have children enrolled and present at the operation
- Require parents or guardians to pick up and drop off of children outside of the operation unless you determine that there is a legitimate need for the parent to enter the operation. Ideally, the same parent or designated person should drop off and pick up the child every day. If possible, older people such as grandparents or those with serious underlying medical conditions should not pick up children, because they are more at risk for [serious illness from COVID-19](#)
- Before allowing entry into the operation, assess the symptoms of all individuals (including children). Each day take and track the temperature of each person entering, deny entry to any person who meets any of the following criteria:
 - A temperature of 100.4°F or above;
 - Signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as a cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and low-grade fever;
 - In the previous 14 days has had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19; is under investigation for COVID-19, or is ill with a respiratory illness
- Have an isolation room or area (such as a cot in the corner of the classroom) use to isolate a sick child. Additional information about isolation in related settings is available here: [isolation at home](#) and [isolation in healthcare settings](#)
- Follow CDC guidance on how to [disinfect your building or facility](#) if someone is sick
- Establish a curriculum and educational methods to inform children on how they can help prevent the spread of COVID-19, including:
 - Frequent hand washing
 - Avoiding close and direct contact with other children and facility staff
 - Telling their teacher as soon as possible if they feel sick
 - Coughing and sneezing etiquette (cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve; not their hands)
 - Discouraging children from sharing food, drinking cups, eating utensils, towels, toothbrushes, etc.

OCEE 05/11/2020

Employee Practices

- Encourage staff to take [everyday preventive actions](#) to prevent the spread of respiratory illness
- Implement symptoms and temperature check procedures for staff as they come to work
- [Wash hands](#) often with soap and water. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces
- Encourage staff to [wear face coverings](#), when possible
- Provide training to staff on basic overview and understanding of infection control measures that you can take in childcare settings to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Free online options include:
 - Office of Head Start: [Free webinar on Caring for Children in Group Settings During COVID-19](#)
 - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension: [Free online course on Special Considerations for Infection Control During COVID-19](#)
- Practice 6ft of distance amongst staff as much as possible
- Stagger shifts, breaks and meals to maintain social distancing
- All employees should stay home if feeling ill. Employees who are higher risk of serious illness to COVID-19 are encouraged to stay home
- Direct any employee who has COVID-19 symptoms to leave the premises immediately. They should seek medical care or COVID-19 testing. Employers should maintain the confidentiality of employee health information
- Sick staff members should not return to work until they have met the [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#)
- Visibly post signage on health policies to help educate staff on COVID-19 best practices. Find downloadable signage at <http://www.hcphtx.org/Resources/2019-Novel-Coronavirus>.

Planning for Absenteeism

- Determine how you will operate with a reduced staff if employees cannot work due to illness, staying home to care for sick family members and those who must stay home to watch their children
- Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies
- Cross-train employees to perform essential functions, so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent

Free COVID-19 Testing is Available for Everyone

We encourage everyone to get free testing at a testing site. The updated online self-assessment tool is confidential and serves the public in the Greater Houston area. To register for testing, visit <http://covidcheck.hctx.net/>. For those who do have access to the online tool, call **832-927-7575** to get scheduled for testing. Free testing is available regardless of citizenship status and for those who are uninsured.

Employees should **not** return to work if they are sick. If an employee has a sick family member they live with or has been near an ill person, they should notify their employer immediately.

Please go to www.hcphtx.org for any additional information on how to keep yourself or employees safe during this pandemic.

*People at higher risk for severe illness are those who are 65 or older, especially those with chronic lung disease; moderate to severe asthma; chronic heart disease; severe obesity; diabetes; chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis; liver disease; or weakened immune system.

This guidance document is informed by Texas Health & Human Services Guidance for Day Care Operators (<https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/communications-events/news/2020/03/additional-guidance-covid-19-daycare-operators>) and CDC Guidance for Childcare (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>).

OCEE 05/11/2020

Additional Information is Available

From the CDC

[Guidance for Child Care Programs That Remain Open](#)

[Guidance for School Settings \(includes child care and K-12\)](#)

[COVID-19 and Children FAQs](#)

[Talking with Children about COVID-19](#)

[Implementation of Mitigation Strategies for Communities](#)

[Considerations for School Closure](#)

From the Office of the Texas Governor

[Texans Helping Texans: The Governor's Report to Open Texas](#)

[Texas Frontline Child Care Portal](#)

[Governor Abbott, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension](#)

[Service Announce Free Online Training For Child Care Providers During COVID-19 Response](#)

From the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)

[Cases of COVID-19 in Texas](#)

[Texas COVID-19 Information](#)

[Information for Communities and Specific Groups](#)

[Additional Guidance on COVID-19 for Daycare Operators](#)

From Texas Child Care Licensing

[New COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Centers](#)

[Child Care Provider Survey for COVID-19 Impact](#)

From Texas Workforce Commission

[Health and Safety of Child Care Facilities during COVID-19](#)

[TWC Actions Related to COVID-19 through April 1, 2020](#)

From American Academy of Pediatrics

[2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

From Environmental Protection Agency

[Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 \(the virus that causes COVID-19\)](#)

OCEE 05/11/2020